

Message Text

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61

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /139 W

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R 191305Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3999

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 12555

VIENNA FOR AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, IN

SUBJ: GOI DENIES NAXALITE TORTURE

REF: NEW DELHI 11836

1. RESPONDING TO CHARGES OF THE LONDON-BASED AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL THAT 15,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE HELD IN WEST BENGAL JAILS, A GOI HOME MINISTRY SPOKESMAN ON SEPTEMBER 17 TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE ACTUAL FIGURE OF NAXALITIES UNDER DETENTION WAS 1,609. ACCORDING TO NEW DELHI PAPERS CARRYING THE STORY ON SEPTEMBER 18, THE OFFICIAL DENIED CHARGES THAT THE ETAINEES WERESUBJECT TO TORTURE IN WEST BENGAL JAILS OR KEPT UNDER UNSANITARY CONDITIONS. THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH 18,119 NAXALITES HAD BEEN ARRESTED BETWEEN MARCH 1970 AND FEBRUARY 1974, MOST OF THEM HAD BEEN RELEASED. OF THOSE STILL CONFINED, 92 ARE DETAINEES AND 1,017 "UNDERTRIALS".

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2. THE TIMES OF INDIA QUOTES THE SPOKESMAN AS SAYING "ONE OR

TWO CASES OF EXCESSES THAT CAME TO LIGHT HAVE ALREADY BEEN INQUIRED INTO." THE SPOKESMAN ASSERTED THERE IS NO CATEGORY CALLED POLITICAL PRISONER IN INDIA, BUT ADDED THAT THE JAIL CODE PERMITS SOME PRIVILEGES TO THOSE ARRESTED IN POLITICAL OR DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS. SUCH PERSONS ARE ENTITLED TO HIGHER CLASSIFICATION UNLESS ARRESTED FOR OFFENSES INVOLVING FIREARMS ARE VIOLENCE. THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THE NAXALITES SHARE THE SAME INCONVENIENCES AS OTHERS IN OVERCROWDED JAILS BUT CONTENDED THAT IMPROVING JAIL CONDITIONS IS UNDER CONSTANT EXAMINATION.

3. WE SHALL MAKE FURTHER DISCREET INQUIRIES AND REPORT OUR FURTHER EVALUATION BY OCTOBER 4.
SCHNEIDER

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